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Hometown, USA: A Community Digest About Searcy, Arkansas, 2000

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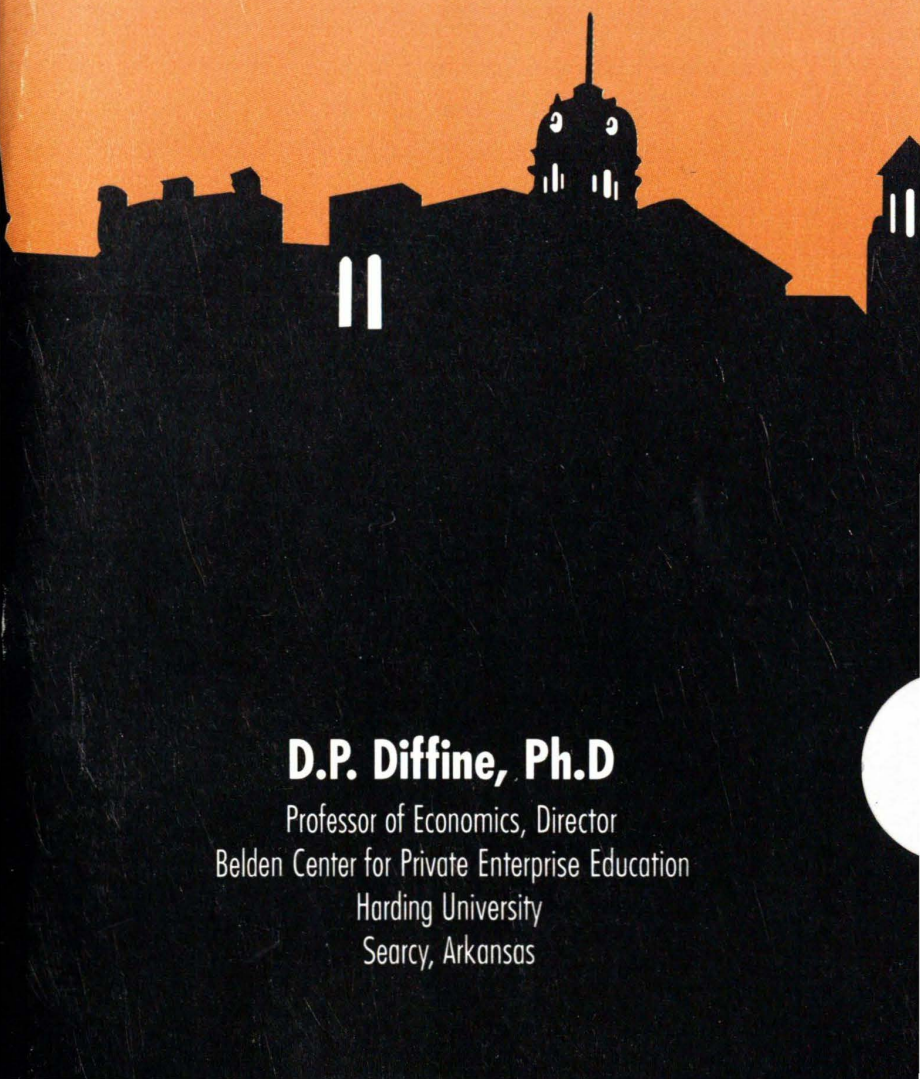
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HARDING
UNIVERSITY

Hometown, USA

A
Community Digest
about
Searcy, Arkansas



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A
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of the
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INTRODUCTION -- A Moving Experience

Local tradition has it, that in 1954, then-Mayor Frank Headlee appeared on a Little Rock television talk show program to promote Searcy, Arkansas. Proclaiming that the town was indeed "rich", in a colorful play on words he went on: *"Every blade of grass has a green bulk, every bird has a bill, the chimneys have their drafts, the streets are flushed, the lawns get a rake off, the clouds have a silver lining, and every flower has at least one scent."*

Well, when this writer moved to Searcy, Arkansas from south Texas 30 years ago, the local realtor provided this sage advice, *"Once you become a Searcian, you can never leave."* At that time, I didn't know what he meant. Now, as this publication goes through its latest metamorphosis spanning three decades, I truly know what the realtor meant.

The writing and rewriting of this comprehensive digest may never end, due to all the dynamic changes that necessitate a new edition every few years. It is truly a labor of love -- a perpetually *"unfinished symphony"* that has sold me on Searcy for the duration.

What a pleasure it has been over the past 30 years to get to meet and know so many of Searcy's civic and business leaders! A colleague of mine loves to remark, *"Here, thousands live as millions wish they could."* Alas, having also lived for 24 years in a county of 13 million people, Los Angeles, I can only reply, *"Amen to that!"*

This monograph has become a relevant, practical and interesting experience for me and, at the same time, it helps Searcy by providing a thorough but condensed course of city information available to business and

Introduction

industry, individuals and families considering Searcy as a possible site for location and home.

For additional detailed information, data, and annotated reference sources, the reader is referred to the author's books, *LOCATING IN SEARCY ARKANSAS -- Facts for Business and Industry, Individuals and Families*, 4th edition, 1987 and *ARKANSAS AND THE U.S. ECONOMY IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY*, first edition, 1996.

Because of the unique relationship between our wonderful community and Harding University, "*HOMETOWN, USA -- An Economic Digest about Searcy, Arkansas*" is one of the many positive things that have happened along the way to bring Searcy and Harding University closer together. Special thanks for the updated features of this edition also go to Mayor David Evans and Chamber President, Buck Lane.

This new informational guide can be a significant factor in recruiting a proper mix of people and industry necessary to move Searcy forward as a thriving rural center of commerce and agribusiness. I commend all involved to commit themselves to such a mandate.

I. The Natural State

Arkansas is truly an ideal spot in our great land. Situated at the buckle of the Sunbelt, Arkansas is benefitting from the northeast-to-southwest shift of population in the United States. The migration from frost belt to sun belt, and the economic emergence of the southern tier of states, have thrust our Natural State into the middle of today's action. The labor force, a key indicator, is increasing faster than the national average.

Fifty percent of the U.S. population is within a 550 mile radius of the borders of Arkansas. More than 1,000,000 people live within a one-hour's drive of our state Capitol. Little Rock, the state's capital city and hub of its air, rail, highway and waterway networks, lies about halfway between Chicago and Houston and is somewhat east of center between Los Angeles and New York.

For most of the last decade, Arkansas outpaced the nation and was among the top ten states nationally for percentage increases in output, employment and personal income. A retirement mecca, Arkansas' percentage of older citizens (14.3%) is second only to Florida (17.6%).

Arkansas is ahead of 24 other states in the number of Fortune 500 companies located within our borders. On balance, our state's relatively small population, approximately 2.5 million, does put us at some disadvantage in trying to attract the type of businesses which produce end products for consumers. Transportation cost-wise, these businesses would prefer demographically, and everything else being equal, to be in or near larger markets. Consequently, our forte remains somewhat with the more natural fit, the basic commodities produced from the land.

The Natural State

Among the nation's 48 contiguous states, Arkansas' business climate has consistently ranked well in the South Central region and nationally in annual studies. With exports and foreign investments accounting for 13% of the Gross State Product, and over 50,000 jobs for Arkansas, it is clear that our business links to the world are something we cannot ignore. Some 119 firms owned by foreign companies employ about 31,000 Arkansans. There are 18 businesses in White County alone which export goods overseas.

Even during the national recession in 1990-91, Arkansas was recording near-record high levels of capital outlays for industrial growth, plant expansions, jobs, new facilities. In a recent year, Arkansas added 25,000 jobs, while California lost over 330,000 jobs. And several California businesses relocated to Arkansas: R. & G Sloane Co., Rohr Industries, Beverly Enterprises, Road Systems, and Sharper Image distribution. British Aerospace has also announced the relocation of its corporate headquarters from Washington D.C. to Little Rock.

So, let's pass the word: Arkansas is a thriving rural center of commerce and agribusiness. True, in good times, the Arkansas economy may not always surge at the rate of the U.S. economy. However, we usually experience milder recessions than the rest of the nation. And wouldn't you know it, in hard times nationally, people eat more of our wholesome Arkansas chicken.

II. Tax Base and Income

In Arkansas, industry receives a handshake, not a shakedown. From an overall standpoint, taxes in Arkansas are among the lowest in the nation. State and local governments have aided the era of industrialization by providing incentives on the one hand, while attempting to exercise relatively tight fiscal controls on the other hand.

Act 529, the state's 1985 investment tax credit of 7% for manufacturers who invest more than \$5 million -- this has contributed significantly to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in additional spending for plant and equipment. Did this tax credit cost? No, it paid for itself many times over.

Our Governor has sold an impressive economic incentive program to the Legislature. As a result, the entire state of Arkansas is now one large enterprise zone with its respective tax credits incentive. Local municipalities, with the help of voters, will now be able to finance their respective campaigns to build the brick and mortar social capital necessary to attract industry. Other incentive and loan programs will favor small business, day-care centers and the Delta.

A study of tax and fee policy, along with a conservative approach to tax increases, shows that the tax climate in Searcy is favorable and a desirable attribute for locating in the city. Specifically, there is a 4.625% state sales tax, a 1% county sales tax, and a 0.5% city sales tax.

The 38.1 mills real estate tax (based on 20% of assessed value) computes to an effective tax rate per \$1,000 of market value

Tax Base and Income

of \$7.32. There is a state personal income tax with variable rates of 1% to 7% of net income and a corporate income tax of 6.5% of net income in excess of \$100,000.

At \$18,000, White County per capita pre-tax income typically is about 90% of the state average, or 70% of the national average. Average weekly earnings are presently \$430. Interestingly, after adjusting for comparative living costs and taxes of all types, some of the seemingly affluent states slip toward the bottom of the list, according to two separate estimates of relative purchasing power.

The average annual growth of per capita personal income over the past decade was about 5%, equaling the state and national average. Median (or middlemost) family income is about \$27,000, with mean (average) family income approaching \$34,000. After taxes, the average Arkansan then has an adjusted per capita income higher than the citizens of seven Midwestern and Northeastern states: Rhode Island, Kentucky, North Dakota, South Dakota, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, and Maine, respectively.

Business is good in Arkansas, and it will get better as new jobs create new needs, which, in turn, create more new jobs. Such are the makings of real opportunities. According to companies with multi-state operations, the Arkansan will have less absenteeism and more productivity than his counterparts almost anywhere else.

III. Our Town

Searcy, Arkansas, one of Arkansas' prominent home towns, is a thriving trade center of commerce and agribusiness. The economy of Searcy works because White Countians work hard. The composite Searcian appreciates the opportunity to have a good job. He wants to help his company grow; quality consciousness is a way of life.

The Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED), which recently held its international meeting in Searcy, has again recertified our town as an "*Arkansas Community of Excellence*." Searcy is also in the top 10 of Arkansas' faster growing cities.

Our community is a desirable place to live and work amid natural beauty free from urban pressures. Most future jobs will come from small business, light manufacturing, food processing, tourism, technology, services. The most significant customer for small business is big business. So, we'll continue to attract some capital intensive firms requiring greater worker skill levels.

Searcy is a likely area of the state for future commercial development. Connected to Little Rock, the state's economic nerve center, by 50 miles of super highway, Searcy is increasingly becoming a bedroom community for Little Rock. The state of Arkansas has a "*Free Port*" law, which applies to finished inventories maintained by manufacturers located within the state and stored in warehouses in transit through Arkansas to destinations outside the state.

Location and climate, economic as well as natural, have combined to position Arkansas at the right place at the right time. Recently, the City Council passed a resolution to allow an Enterprise Zone to be activated in the city.

Our Town

Winner of the 1995 Henry Award at the 22nd Annual Governor's Conference, Searcy's gift to Arkansas is our *"Holiday of Lights."* The White County Courthouse and the surrounding grounds, trimmed in thousands of tiny white lights, becomes the center stage of events for a month-long festival. Parks, stores, and homes throughout our community reach deep into their hearts to bring out the spirit of the season with decorative displays all over town. People come from all over Arkansas to enjoy the sights and play a part in White County's Holiday Season.

Four radio stations are located in White County: KWCK--1300AM, 99.9FM; KAPZ/KKSY--107.1 FM; KABK--K97.7 FM, and KPIK--101.5 FM. Searcy is also served by seven television stations out of Little Rock and 49 additional stations through cable TV. TV3 is a new local channel.

Computer users can now go online to access additional information through the Searcy homepage: searcy.dina.org (text, graphics, color photographs, weather forecasts, etc.) or e-mail at cswnet.com. Two daily newspapers are available. *The Daily Citizen*, oldest west of the Mississippi, is printed in the city of Searcy. *The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* is also an excellent statewide publication.

There are 40 churches in Searcy offering a variety of religious beliefs, along with 120 civic, professional, and interest groups.

IV. Infrastructure

Searcy is located three miles from the junction of U.S. 67 (interstate expressway) and U.S. 64 (east-west highway). These are modern concrete highways. Little Rock, St. Louis, and Dallas are directly accessible on U.S. 67. Memphis, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City are reached via U.S. 64. U.S. Highways 64 and 67 actually bypass Searcy, and this has eliminated through traffic and reduced accidents and noise. The new east-west Beebe-Capps four-lane bypass has been completed, and the north-south Highway 16 is being widened to provide access to the Beebe-Capps bypass.

The four-lane interstate, U.S. 67/167, provides four major access roads into Searcy. Of special significance are the center exit and ramps which permit direct access into the Industrial Park without driving through the city itself. The interstate expressway connects Searcy with interstate expressways U.S. 30 and U.S. 40.

The Searcy Municipal Airport, recognized by the FAA as the *"Outstanding Arkansas Airport for 1993,"* offers ambulance, air freight, charters, flight training, maintenance, rentals, sightseeing, and storage. There is a 5,000 ft. paved and lighted runway and a high intensity instrument approach to the airport. An average of 50 planes use the Searcy Airport daily. A Global Position System (GPS) has recently been installed to assist pilots to land in marginal weather, along with a new automated surface observation system (ASOS). Searcy is also serviced by commercial air flights into Little Rock, 50 miles south.

Searcy is served by a complete rail system for freight transportation through a local company -- the Doniphan, Kensett, and

Infrastructure

Searcy Railroad. There are 5.5 miles of track which connect 4 miles east with the Missouri Pacific Railroad's main line at Kensett, Arkansas. Fifteen major trucking firms provide service offering overnight service to major points within a 400-mile radius of Searcy. There are 11 different warehousing facilities in Searcy.

Rate Based Mileage and Directions to Major U.S. Cities

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Atlanta | 520 miles SE |
| Chicago | 557 miles NE |
| Dallas | 400 miles SW |
| Little Rock | 50 miles SW |
| Memphis | 103 miles E |
| New Orleans | 465 miles SE |
| New York | 1,263 miles NE |
| St. Louis | 295 miles NE |
| Tulsa | 331 miles NW |

The largest police department in the county, the Searcy Police Department has 38 officers and 30 radio-equipped patrol cars, and a motorcycle division . There are three divisions: the patrol division, the criminal investigation division, and the support services division. A tri-county drug task force is being developed.

Searcy has three fire stations, employing 29 firefighters, several modern pumper fire apparatus generators for emergency use, a snorkel truck with a 55 foot boom, and an aerial truck with a 95 foot ladder. There are currently 450 fire hydrants in the Searcy area; all are looped water mains to provide for maximum water flow. Searcy maintains an outstanding Class 2 insurance rating. The new sewer treatment plant has doubled the capacity of its predecessor. Curbside recycling is now in operation citywide.

V. Progressive Leadership

In 1999, the United States Chamber of Commerce named the Searcy Chamber of Commerce an accredited organization, an honor bestowed on only five other chambers around the country to date. And yet, in any community, the question is often asked, *"What does the Chamber of Commerce do?"* There are those who believe the Chamber gathers statistics, prints attractive brochures, answers inquiries, and advertises *"what a great place this community is to work, live, and enjoy life."*

The Searcy Chamber does all those things. All of those jobs are important, but they aren't the reasons the Chamber exists. They are fringe benefits of the Chamber -- the things the Chamber does as a matter of course, because those jobs need doing -- and the Chamber is good at them.

There is one main reason for the Searcy Chamber to exist: to do whatever is necessary to keep the area's economic condition at a level where businesses will risk their resources here in hope of making a profit. Everything else is just frosting on the cake -- a means to the end.

Here, as in any other city, the profitable operations of business is the source of all other benefits. Only by succeeding in this fundamental goal, can the Searcy Chamber provide the jobs and produce the wealth to finance all the governmental, civic, educational, cultural and charitable needs that a city is faced with every day.

The Searcy Chamber of Commerce is a catalyst -- a common vehicle through which business and professional people work together for the corporate good of the community. Accordingly, the Searcy Chamber

Progressive Leadership

Board recently developed a Five-Year Master Plan of 24 goals to promote sound economic growth for business and agriculture, along with efforts to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all residents.

The Searcy Chamber's Leadership Program identifies and motivates potential leaders; acquaints them with community needs, problems and opportunities; offers a forum of exchange of alternative methods for dealing with those needs, problems and opportunities; and challenges potential leaders with community involvement and decision making. The Chamber's "*Business After Hours*" program has become a popular place to gather, socialize and exchange information in the Searcy business community.

Additionally, Searcy's Chamber supports the Searcy Public Schools by encouraging involvement and interaction of business leaders. The Chamber supports financial needs and requirements necessary for quality education programs; it also maintains good relationships, works with and supports Harding University, Foothills Technical Institute and Arkansas Technological Institute, ASU Beebe.

In recent years, ADED has sponsored 23 "*Quality First*" programs in Searcy. Over 400 *Quality Management* students have graduated, representing 60 companies and yielding \$15 million in savings to local businesses. Searcy's pioneering "*Quality First*" program is a model for others in the Mid-South.

VI. Industrial Progress

Recertified recently by the ADED as an Arkansas Community of Excellence (ACE), some of the site criteria needed to become an ACE city include the following:

- utilities at the site or a cost estimate to run utilities to the site;
- a slope of less than 5% over the entire site;
- paved access or a cost estimate for it;
- environmental, soil and wetland analyses;
- aerial photographs and topographical and plat maps;
- industrial zoning already in place.

A program of civic development has been sparked by the enthusiastic support of the Searcy Chamber of Commerce. Industry has been attracted to the city by its progressiveness and interest which is evidenced by financial support of new industry through the Searcy Industrial Development Corporation. Planning is in the works for a new 500-acre industrial park.

The Searcy Industrial Development Corporation (S.I.D.C.) is a legally organized corporation sponsored by the Searcy Chamber of Commerce. The S.I.D.C. works with the Industrial Development Committee of the Searcy Chamber of Commerce in providing information for industrial prospects to help them arrive at a decision as to whether or not to locate in Searcy.

The established industries in Searcy are prospering. The Searcy success formula has been $SL + CCC = GP$; meaning, *Sound Leadership* plus *Concerned Cooperative Citizens* equal *Growth and Progress*. When an individual industry decides to locate in

Industrial Progress

Searcy, the S.I.D.C. is responsible for all legal aspects of any agreement between the industry and the Chamber of Commerce, city, or private individual who may be selling land for use by the industry.

The S.I.D.C. may purchase, lease, rent, or sell and receive bequests or donations of real or personal property. It has the power to make contracts, borrow money, issue bonds, and loan money required in the establishment or expansion of an industry within the city. Financing for the new industries is available through issuance of Act 9 and Act 49 bonds.

Numerous industrial sites are available for approximately \$20,000 per acre. Average construction costs are approximately \$36.00 per square foot (minimum \$18.00). Average lease cost per square foot is \$10.00. Available in the Industrial Park is a 12-inch water line, a 15-inch sewer line, and electric primary lines which run from the Entergy Substation. Gas lines and railroad sidings are also available.

In 1999, existing industries in Searcy, Arkansas added 321 new jobs and had capital investments of approximately \$23,000,000. Future growth into the mid-south will probably come from the continued migration of manufacturing, and private-service industries to take advantage of our region's relatively lower wages, taxes, energy costs, land costs, and mild climate. The national population is also expected to increase most rapidly in our region.

VII. Economic Development

"Economic development" according to the ADED, may be the most commonly discussed, but least understood, issue of this decade. As the ADED has pointed out, we all want economic development. Without it, our children move away, our towns die, and roads deteriorate.

The first step in the economic development process begins with the local community. The ADED is correct in reminding us that no federal or state government program, however well-meaning or well-planned, can be effective in economic development without the initial commitment and efforts of the local community to the creation and maintenance of jobs.

Entergy Corporation is correct in noting that many factors enter into the fight for industry: Labor force (including skills of employees and the wages the employees will demand)... Transportation... Proximity to customers and raw materials... a business climate that makes it easy to operate... energy costs... and availability of existing "spec" buildings for prospects.

Neighboring states are redoubling their efforts in industrial recruitment. To meet that competition, Arkansas must keep the incentives to attract and retain industry: (1) The tax credit, (2) those enterprise zones, (3) continued infrastructure development, and (4) more quality management training.

Continued economic and industrial growth is vital to the quality of life in our state and for the future of our children. Therefore, The Entergy Corporation announced seven years ago their program, *"Teamwork Arkansas"* -- a five-year, \$10-15 million commitment to

Economic Development

creating more jobs for the state. *"Teamwork Arkansas"* represents a coordinated private sector commitment to support public efforts through a five-year plan to address specific goals and needs in the areas of industrial prospecting, community development, and national advertising and public relations.

Administered through the Entergy Corporation Marketing Department, *"Teamwork Arkansas"* works in concert with the ADED, the state and local chambers of commerce, and other groups dedicated to Arkansas' future. It incorporates the findings in in-depth research in recent studies initiated by then-Governor Bill Clinton, notably the 1986 report of the *"Jobs For Arkansas' Future"* committee, which provided with key guideposts in directing our economic development efforts.

Simultaneously, area chambers of commerce in our Natural State have, with private sector encouragement, launched leadership institutes. These forward-looking institutes identify and motivate potential leaders; acquaint them with community needs, problems and opportunities; offer a forum of exchange of alternative methods for dealing with those needs, problems and opportunities; and challenge potential leaders with community involvement and decision-making.

Yes, economic development may begin with the local community, but it cannot end there. As the ADED notes, it is no longer adequate to just be a *"nice place to live."* But it is a good start, for sure.

VIII. Manufacturing

Many people believe that the manufacturing sector is becoming less important to the Arkansas economy. Actually, just the opposite is true. Manufacturing is very important to Arkansas as a generator of jobs and income.

Regarding manufacturing intensity, we are ninth in nation. That may seem to make us more vulnerable to swings in the business cycle. But we are diversified into recession-resistant industries. They tend to be less vulnerable. Arkansas' excellent performance in the 1990's (jobs, output and personal income gains, etc.) proves that. Our largest manufacturing employer is in food processing, the paragon of recession-resistant industries.

White County's manufacturing employment has been growing at approximately 2% per year. Searcy's industry is diversified. It is a distribution center for the nation's largest discount chain; it is also the home of one of the Mid South's best-known ice creams. Searcy-made sinks, dryers, pumps, valves, bronze plaques, frozen foods, fast food containers, tractor trailers, pallets, copper coils, leather products, rollers, feeds, and other articles are shipped to distant corners of the world.

Arkansas counts manufacturing as one of its major economic factors. Each newcomer is accompanied by certain basic needs for housing, services, and retail establishments, to name just three. Over the past several years, major plant openings and expansions have occurred. So, business is good in Arkansas, and it will get better as new jobs create new needs, which in turn create more new jobs. Such are the makings of real opportunities.

Manufacturing

Over half the employees in manufacturing in Arkansas live in communities with a population of less than 2,500. The personal income derived from manufacturing has a great impact. Without these payrolls, says the ADED, many communities would face difficult economic times. The local and state tax bases would erode, leading to declining services and fewer educational opportunities.

The impact of manufacturing jobs is highly significant when total earnings are examined. According to the Arkansas State Chamber, for every 100 new manufacturing jobs created in a community, 64 non-manufacturing jobs are created: 45 jobs in wholesale and retail, entertainment and recreation; 7 jobs in transportation; 3 in finance, insurance and real estate; 3 in repairs and services; 3 in construction; and 3 in public administration.

All manufacturing employees earn about \$6 billion; \$4 billion went into small towns, as 60% of our manufacturing workers come from small towns. It is fair to assume that without these paychecks, many small towns would languish and lose population.

In Arkansas, perhaps as in no other state, it is appropriate to observe that population growth and economic development have become one of those *"Which came first -- the chicken or the egg?"* propositions. All newcomers do indeed arrive complete with multiple needs for housing, services, and retail establishments, etc.

Like a developing country, the south has reached the *"take-off"* stage of its economic growth. The south has been an under-developed region in the past, but it is catching up; it has a better growth potential than any other region of the country.

IX. Retail Sector

In the last decade, retail sales in Searcy have increased 4.8% annually. There are many reasons for doing business in Searcy. The many business firms have been so enthusiastic and supportive of Searcy that they united in a "*Shop in Searcy*" campaign. Most shoppers' needs can be fulfilled in Searcy. By doing business in our own community, the sales tax dollars come back to the city to maintain the many services.

Searcy has a vital downtown area which forms a town square around the oldest active courthouse west of the Mississippi River. There are a variety of major retail anchors in several shopping-centers located throughout the city. Shop our stores and eat our tasty food while you spend a comfortable night with us in one of our fine motels. Local merchants are eager to help newcomers and provide personal service to make you feel welcome.

Shoppers are friends and neighbors to local business people. Businesses support the activities which interest the public. Shoppers receive personal attention and courteous service. Shopping is easy, comfortable, and safe in Searcy. One can save time and money when buying here. The local business people are reliable and dependable. Consumers find great selection and variety of services in Searcy stores:

Convenient shopping facilities accessible to a large trade area... a large array of fabrics... men's clothing, ladies' ready-to-wear and children's shops... bridal and formal attire... cosmetics and cosmetologists... fine shoe stores... department stores and discount houses providing thousands of items and nationally known brands...

Retail Sector

jewelry stores with exquisite gems, watches along with crystal and silver... professional florists... antique shops provide the yesteryear decor... supermarkets open 24 hours a day... appliance stores with televisions, computers, video equipment and VCR's... modern machinery and equipment for farm and home... automobile dealers with excellent new and used car bargains... automotive and farm implement parts, and skilled mechanics and technicians.

Excellent commercial banks serve the financial needs of Searcy and White County; deposits have grown 9% annually in recent years. Most of these institutions have branch offices as well. Many of the banks, and also representatives of a few securities firms, provide financial planning and access to the securities markets for individuals and companies. Searcy features over 30 insurance agencies to meet the needs of area residents. The second largest county by land mass in Arkansas, Searcy has many excellent realtors to assist with a move to the county. There is a very fine legal community in Searcy.

There are about 45 restaurants located within the city limits of Searcy. Restaurants in Searcy are predominately the fast food variety, although there are at least one dozen full service restaurants. Five facilities are capable of handling meetings or banquets arranging up to as many as 1,000 people, in the case of the Harding University Cafeteria.

X. Labor Force Demographics

With a county population of 67,000, and growing 2% a year, there are about 30,000 people in our labor market. Its composition is 59% male and 41% female. Average hourly manufacturing wage is about \$9.00. Although employment has been growing at 4% annually, White County unemployment rates have been slightly above the state of Arkansas rate -- an attractive feature for prospective employers.

Sixty percent of the county is classified as rural. The population of 67,000 makes it the 10th largest county in the state. The county seat, Searcy, has the largest population in the county, with about 22,000 residents. The civilian labor force is growing about 2% a year. The recruiting area covers a 30 mile radius and includes six adjoining counties.

Seventy-five percent of new jobs created each year are from existing industry expansions, according to the Fantus Database developed for the Searcy Chamber. A commuting pattern survey of representatives of Searcy employees shows that 70% travel 10 miles or less to work.

By occupational categories, Managerial/Professional comprise 18% of the total employment picture. Sales/Technical/Administrative comprise 25%. Service occupations employ 13.6%. Precision/production/craft/repair employ 16.1%. Operators/fabricators/laborers round out the final 27.4% of the White County labor force.

White Countians are employed in the following percentages: Agriculture (6.5), Mining (.02), Construction (8.3), Manufacturing (23.7), Financial/Insurance/Real Estate (3.2), Services (27.3), Transportation/Communication/Utilities (6.0), Wholesale Trade (17.5), and Public Administration (2.4).

Labor Force Demographics

Listed below are the most recent estimates of potential labor supply:

| | Total | Male | Female |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Total Active Job Applicants | 4,273 | 2,348 | 1,925 |
| Experienced Manufacturing | 1,279 | 661 | 618 |
| Experienced Non-Manufacturing | 2,899 | 1,636 | 1,263 |
| Inexperienced | 95 | 51 | 44 |

Additionally, experienced workers by occupation are as follows:

| | Total | Male | Female |
|---------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Professional | 416 | 211 | 205 |
| Clerical | 879 | 252 | 627 |
| Service | 485 | 175 | 310 |
| Processing | 132 | 75 | 57 |
| Machine Trades | 421 | 326 | 95 |
| Bench Work | 726 | 259 | 467 |
| Structural Work | 517 | 485 | 32 |
| Farming and Miscellaneous | 608 | 515 | 93 |

Arkansas is one of 20 states which has passed the Right to Work Law. The 20 states which ban compulsory unionism continue to out-distance the 30 states which do not have Right to Work Laws, in the creation of new manufacturing jobs, non-agriculture jobs, and contract construction employment.

XI. Private Educational Institutions

Harding University in Searcy enrolls about 4,000 students from 50 states and 45 foreign countries. Harding is a Christian, liberal arts, co-educational senior university with 47 buildings located on 200 acres of land comprising the \$100 million campus physical plant. Harding attempts to be non-sectarian in spirit and practice. It desires to admit students who are academically capable, who have high character, and who accept the aims and objectives of the University.

Harding University is also a high-demand university that has been listed in recent issues of three national directories: Peterson's Guide to Competitive Colleges, Best Dollar Values in American Colleges, and 200 Most Selective Colleges. More than 50 undergraduate majors with numerous sequences of specialization are offered. There are several masters degrees and pre-professional programs also available. Evening continuing education and professional development classes are available along with summer courses. There are also branch campuses in Florence, Italy; Athens, Greece; London, England; and Brisbane, Australia.

The nationally recognized and award winning American Studies Institute supplements the curriculum of the university with educationally beneficial presentations by internationally known authorities. Harding University's Business and Economics Teams have frequently and repeatedly won national competitions.

Harding is a member of the NCAA Gulf South Conference, Division II. Men's competition includes football, baseball, track, cross country, tennis, golf, and soccer. Women's competition includes basketball, cross country, tennis, track, volleyball, and soccer.

Private Educational Institutions

Harding Academy is a private Christian school for students in pre-school through 12th Grade. The academy has full accreditation through the state of Arkansas and the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges. Enrollment is 500 students each year with increasing numbers coming from surrounding communities.

Boarding facilities for Harding Academy are provided for a limited number of students in grades 9-12. The students are high achievers. They regularly score above state and national norms on standardized achievement tests, and more than 90% enter college upon graduation from high school.

Harding Academy attempts to promote Christian attitudes and ideals among the student body. All students are expected to adhere to a reasonable code of dress and conduct. High moral standards, respect, kindness, and courtesy are promoted by the faculty and student body. The majority of Harding Academy students have been raised with wholesome, positive Christian attitudes.

The quest for excellence spills over into every facet of Academy life. Athletic teams consistently win county and district championships in football, basketball, tennis, and track, with state class "A" championships coming in football, track, and tennis. Harding Academy students also do well in competition in art, drama, music, speech, business games, and Future Business Leaders of America.

XII. Economic Impact

Harding University itself, and the students themselves, provide a significant percentage of consumer spending in Searcy and White County. The 4,000 students now spend locally an average of \$1,250 each per year, totaling \$5 million. Approximately 2,500 students drive cars.

Economic base multipliers can run as low as 1.2 or as high as 7.0, depending on a community's structure and size. A conservative multiplier estimate would be 4.0. Therefore, a reasonable extrapolation would indicate that Harding University student expenditures have the purchasing power impact of \$20 million, as each dollar changes hands approximately four times.

To assist the students in meeting the cost of private education, Harding University employs about 1000 students on a part time basis, annually spending \$1.3 million in the Student Work Program (20 years ago, that figure was approximately \$100,000). Harding University also has 600 full time employees and a \$14 million annual payroll.

The 1999-2000 budget of Harding University is \$62 million. Applying the same multiplier, remembering that the total budget does include the \$20 million payroll -- and factoring in average student expenditures -- a conservative estimate is that the campus generates in excess of \$250 million a year for the general economy.

Not included in the above estimates (except by factoring in a conservative multiplier constant) are offsetting factors -- local revenue generated by visitors at major Harding functions (for example, one local restaurant manager recently reported a 50% increase in

Economic Impact

revenue during the three-day Spring Sing Weekend) and conversely, individual and institutional expenditures which would not be classified as *"local-purchase."*

However, there are other ways that a university campus has economic impact on its region, such as assisting local industries. The Harding University campus increases the area's attractiveness, by making available a supply of well-trained people, cultural amenities, etc. Former *"Star Search"* Male Vocalist Champion David Slater is a Harding University Graduate.

Guests of the American Studies Institute Conference Center can attend sessions in the 500-seat Heritage Auditorium or in one of five multi-purpose rooms. Banquet rooms are designed to accommodate groups ranging from 100 to 1000. Located in the same building, the Heritage Inn provides 100 guests with easily accessible lodging during their visit to Harding.

Located near the campus of Harding University is a Christian independent-living retirement community. It consists of 116 residential units with the choice of studio, one or two bedroom suites. Each unit has a fully-equipped kitchen, 24-hour emergency response system, and community medical facilities. Two meals are provided daily, along with regularly scheduled housekeeping service and courtesy van transportation.

XIII. Public Schools

The White County Public School System is composed of 27 separate schools distributed in 11 cities, with each possessing a complete educational system. Searcy has the largest enrollment in the county. The Searcy Special School District is made up of six schools, employing 350 persons and has a total enrollment of about 4,000 students.

The Searcy Public School System has maintained a tradition of providing excellence in education throughout its long history. Governed by a five person board of education, the school is led by a superintendent and a central administration staff. The Searcy school system is fully accredited by the State Department of Education. Four diplomas are awarded by the school system. They are a general diploma, college preparatory diploma, college preparatory "plus" diploma, and tech preparatory diploma.

The students in the Searcy School System consistently and significantly score above the national average on normed tests. The student/teacher ratio is 16.5/1. The grade levels are divided into elementary (K-5), middle school (6-7), junior high (8-9), and high school (10-12). An intensive computer technology program has been implemented with all K-5 classrooms and the libraries on line.

Searcy High School Vocational Program offerings are available to students in the last three grade levels (10-11-12). Introductory skill level programs are primarily available to sophomores. The more technical and advanced skill development offerings are made available to junior and senior level students. Searcy Public Schools, each year,

Public Schools

offer a number of adult education evening programs for citizens in the area.

The Foothills Technical Institute in Searcy offers complete facilities consisting of the latest equipment and teaching aids. The school offers a variety of technological programs including air conditioning, electronic technology, industrial electronics, industrial maintenance, computerized accounting, administrative assistant, auto body, diesel technology, practical nursing, specialized machining, basic machining, medical records technology assistant, automotive technology, parts specialist, and day care. The Institute offers both day and night courses.

Arkansas State University and Technical Institute in Beebe, 20 miles South of Searcy, has approximately 2,000 part-time and full time students in 19 degree programs. Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and a branch of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, most ASU-Beebe students are candidates for the Associate of Arts degree, with emphasis in Agriculture, Animal Science, Art, Biological Science, Business and Commerce Technology, Business and Management, Liberal Arts, Mathematics, and Speech and Theater.

XIV. Agribusiness

In Arkansas, agribusiness is big business. Each year, Arkansas leads the nation in production and exportation of both rice and commercial broiler chickens. From cotton to soybeans, poultry to tomatoes, Arkansas is among the nation's top ten producers.

Although there are big operations in agribusiness, the individual farmer still plays a key role. Literally thousands of Arkansas farmers grow commodities on contract for major companies, thus avoiding the economic pressures that have forced most of their counterparts off the land they love.

The right kind of soil and the right amount of moisture come together in the southeastern quadrant of the state to make it the nation's rice bowl. An estimated 5% to 10% of each year's crop is barged down the Mississippi and thence to foreign markets. The opposite, northwest, corner of the state is the nation's poultry house. Scientific growing methods have cut the growing time nearly in half to help feed Americans whose per capita consumption of chicken is growing 50% faster than red meat.

White County topography is unique. The eastern one-third of the land in the county is rich, flat alluvial and terrace bottomland. The western two-thirds of the land area lies along the edge of the gentle, rolling Ozark foothills. This land grows lush pasture and has clear streams which supply excellent conditions for poultry and livestock production.

In White County, soybeans and rice occupy the most land and produce the most revenue of all the farm crops. White County ranks first in the state in both strawberry and table grape

Agribusiness

production and second in poultry in the state. White County ranks fourth in beef production.

Annually, the sales of crops produced in the county exceed a value of \$30 million, in addition to the revenue generated through the area agriculture business that provide crop inputs, farm services, and production capital. National figures indicate that every dollar earned by local farmers eventually means an additional seven dollars in the community. By this calculation, local farmers contribute nearly a quarter billion dollars to the White County economy each year.

Agriculture is also changing. In the last half decade, beef cattle, rice, soybeans, table grapes, and commercial egg production enterprises have expanded rapidly. The agriculture enterprises in White County are indeed very diversified. They include those crops mentioned above plus growing of catfish, ornamental fish, several types of ratites (ostrich and emu), longhorn cattle and other minor crops. At the same time, cotton, dairying, and strawberry enterprises have been on the decline.

At the east border of White County in Augusta, and 80 miles west of Memphis Tennessee, is the White River, navigable on a year-round basis for exporting agricultural and forest products. The White River connects with the Arkansas, Mississippi, and the Ohio inland water systems.

XV. Public Sector

The city of Searcy uses a Mayor-Council form of government. The government of White County is administered by the Quorum Court, the county's elected officials. The current Arkansas Constitution provides for the traditional executive, legislative, and judicial type government.

Over three dozen federal, state, and local government offices are headquartered in Searcy, Arkansas. Searcy is represented by two of the most well-known legislators in Arkansas, Senator Mike Beebe and Representative John Paul Capps, after whom the new east-west expressway is named.

Searcy is a regional health care center. The medical complexes offer the latest technological advances. With two hospitals, totaling 273 beds, two large clinics, numerous other small clinics, and a Radiation Therapy Institute, Searcy attracts very fine physicians.

The White County Medical Center was founded in 1967. It is dedicated to continuous quality improvement and is involved in a continuous expansion and renovation process. White County Medical Center provides a wide range of state of the art technology and services, 124 beds, and a medical staff consisting of over 100 members. The goal for the White County Medical Center is to provide high quality health care at reasonable prices to our community.

Central Arkansas Hospital opened in May 1975, with on-going expansions and renovations by Tenant Corporation since that time. There are a wide range of services available, 149 available beds, and a 100-member medical staff. The hospital is perceived as a dominant, private hospital

Public Sector

delivering high quality care with highly specialized medical staff and high tech equipment.

White County health manpower professionals include 80 physicians, 22 dentists, 190 registered nurses, and 7 veterinarians. The Public Health Department also provides a broad menu of services.

A wide range of medical and surgical services are available in Searcy: special services such as cancer treatment, women's care, same-day surgical services, spine surgery, laser surgery, sports medicine, 24-hour emergency service with physicians on staff, home health services, a rehab center, hemodialysis and permanent Magnetic Resonance Image (MRI) equipment. Substance abuse treatment and nursing home facilities are also available.

"If I could rest anywhere, it would be in Arkansas," once declared Davy Crockett. The number of Arkansans 65 or older represents 14.3% of the state's total population. Only Florida has a greater percentage of senior citizens (17.6%). The greater Searcy area has a combined 420-bed capacity in three private nursing homes.

Three local facilities, Sunshine School, White County Group Homes, and New Hope Specialized Industries, provide the bulk of services to the mentally and developmentally handicapped of the area. The three programs meet the needs of the handicapped from infancy through adulthood. Their overall aim is to prepare the students to be contributing citizens of the community and to live as independently as possible.

XVI. Housing and Recreation

Residential building costs run about \$65 per square foot (heated area, excluding lot). An average residential lot costs approximately \$25,000. Eighty-two percent of White County's housing stock consists of one family dwellings. There are more than 450 public housing units and 392 motel units available for visitors. There are over 1,200 apartments in Searcy consisting of one, two and three bedrooms, furnished and unfurnished, in multi-unit buildings and town houses. The retirement community is rapidly developing, with a number of facilities available.

The Searcy Sports Complex became a reality in 1986 with the initial purchase of 50 acres next to Searcy Industrial Park. Local businesses, industries, and individuals helped finance the construction. The Complex serves at one central location all of Searcy's athletic events with the following: 12 ball fields; 5 soccer fields, 2 concession stands, and 2 restroom buildings. With the more recent addition of a 30 acre soccer complex, along with additional baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, a walking track, upgraded parking lots, lighting, etc., the complex increased to 116 acres in 1998.

The Carmichael Community Center is a popular recreational facility that is operated throughout the year. Through the Carmichael Community Center and numerous private organizations, a broad array of athletic facilities, courts, and programs are available to the public.

Riverside Park has 89 acres, including a boat launch for access to the Little Red River, two covered pavilions, eight cookout-picnic table setups, restrooms, playground,

Housing and Recreation

barrier-free paved trail for wheel chair or elderly, a river overlook, and miles of natural trails. Berryhill Park now includes a lighted walking-jogging trail, picnic areas, playground equipment, a fountain, a baseball field, a pavilion and numerous tennis courts.

All in all, Searcy has four city parks, a large public swimming pool, two golf courses, 12 tennis courts, two miniature golf courses, a bowling alley, a movie theater, a five-screen cinema, a go-cart track, and one driving range. For the walking-jogging-cycling enthusiast, a five-mile jogging trail has been completed. The trail runs partially around Searcy, parallel to Deener Creek and Gin Creek.

The John E. Lightle Center, the second largest senior citizen center in Arkansas, represents a strong commitment on the part of the city to have a facility for senior citizens, was completed in 1996.

The city council is presently considering the possibility of an expanded boat ramp on the Little Red River, including camp sites, a retreat center and a possible nature trail. A 68 acre lake could be formed in the same area once work on the lower dam is completed.

Entertainment, culture, and community activities are alive and well in Arkansas. From opera to bluegrass to nationally ranked athletic teams, from Ozark native art festivals to elegant, candlelight dining, there is plenty to entertain and enlighten Arkansans the year around. Searcy's *"Summer in the City"* festival recently hosted a successful concert by *"The Beach Boys."*

XVII. Land and Climate

Arkansas is a testimonial that man and nature can live in harmony and even improve on one another's handiwork. Arkansas is richly endowed with natural attributes -- a climate of four distinct but temperate seasons, sparkling streams fed by springs and man-made lakes replenished by ample rainfall, prolific bauxite deposits and the only diamond mine in the nation, and more than 18 million acres of forest land prized by lumberman and vacationer alike.

The hill country, with its attraction to the tourist, artist, sportsman, and vacationer, encompasses roughly half of the state. North of the Arkansas River are the Ozark and Boston Mountains, believed to be among the nation's oldest. Every fall, these northern hills burst into spectacular shades of autumn. To the south are the pine-covered Ouachita Mountains. Petit Jean Mountain sports a grand 75-foot waterfall. Trout fishing on the Little Red River and canoeing down the white waters of the Spring and Buffalo Rivers bring great pleasure.

Arkansas ranks near the top nationally in duck hunting, and White County has excellent duck hunting. White County also ranks near the middle in deer killed for the state. It ranks third in the number of quail killed. Considering its versatility of terrain and abundance of different game, the Searcy area of White County can be considered an excellent area for hunting. White County is a mixture of hills and flat agricultural areas which account for its hunting versatility. There is outstanding squirrel and rabbit hunting in the hardwood bottomlands. The popular sport of dove hunting is very plentiful due to the abundance of milo and maze.

Land and Climate

In the foothills of Arkansas' Ozarks, a half hour's drive from Searcy, stands Greer's Ferry Dam. Behind that structure, dedicated in October 1963 by the late President Kennedy, glistens one of the foremost recreational areas in the middle United States, Greer's Ferry Lake. The paved access roads lead to the numerous parks which include drinking water, toilet facilities, boat launching ramps, parking areas, fireplaces, trash containers, tent and trailer spaces, charcoal grills, and picnic tables for the general convenience of everyone. There are also public boat docks which provide boat and motor rental services, fuel, food, and other boating supplies and services.

The climate of the area around Searcy is classified as a humid sub-tropical climate, characterized by relatively mild temperatures. Rainfall is usually abundant throughout the year, although deficiencies or excesses are especially common during the summer months. The average annual rainfall is 4.31 inches per month. Most precipitation is frontal in origin, occurring along the zone or "front" where two unlike air masses meet. Winters are usually short and mild, but have cold periods of below freezing of a few days' duration. The area has an average frost-free growing season of about 215 days.

Searcy has an average daily maximum temperature of 73 degrees; the average daily minimum temperature is 52 degrees. The average percentage of normal humidity (mean daily noontime) is 57%. There are approximately 75 days when a maximum temperature is reached at 90+ degrees. Searcy has approximately 45 days when the minimum temperature is 32 degrees and under.

THE BOTTOM LINE -- Something for Everyone

Finally, I have been impressed with a brief article in the January, 1991, issue of "City & Town", the official publication of the Arkansas Municipal League. It is entitled "My Town:"

My town is the place where my house is found, where my business is located, and where my vote is cast. It is where my children are educated, where my neighbors dwell, and where my life is chiefly lived. It is the home spot for me.

My town has a right to my civic loyalty. It supports me, and I should support it. My town wants my citizenship, not my partisanship; my friendliness, not my dissensions; my sympathy, not my criticism; my intelligence, not my indifference.

My town supplies me with protection, trade, friends, education, schools, churches, and the right to free moral citizenship. It has some things that are better than others. The best things I should seek to make better; the worst things I should work to suppress. Take it all-in-all, it is my town, and it is entitled to the best there is in me.

The bottom line, or end of the matter, is that business is good in Arkansas. it will get better as new jobs create new needs, which in turn will create more new jobs. Such are the makings of real opportunities. Locally, the Searcy Chamber of Commerce consists of business and professional people who provide the ideas, the drive, the goals, and

Something for Everyone

the voluntary services that work for a better community for everyone.

So, there is plenty to do -- something for each and every one of us to do. Then, the coming generations, who will be the true judges of what we do today, will find us worthy of our tasks.

ORGANIZATIONS, ADDRESSES, AND PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Numbers

For Fire, Police, Ambulance,
and Sheriff 911
Searcy Fire Department 268-2411
Searcy Police Department . . . 268-3531
Sheriff's Office 268-3543

Health Care Numbers

911 Emergency Service
417 N. Spruce Office
Emergencies dial 911 268-4810

Carti-North
405 Rodgers 268-7870

Central Arkansas Hospital (Tenant)
1200 S. Main 268-7171

Doctor's Building (Doctors listed
by name and service
1300 S. Main 268-2441

Pro-Med Ambulance Service
1115 S. Benton 268-2323

Searcy Medical Center
2900 Hawkins 278-2800

White County Memorial Hospital
3214 E. Race 268-6121

Public Education

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Ahlf Junior High | |
| 308 W. Vine | 268-3158 |
| McRae Elementary School | |
| 701 McRae Ave. | 268-3936 |
| Searcy Public Schools | |
| Superintendent's Office | |
| 801 N. Elm | 268-3517 |
| Searcy Senior High | |
| 301 N. Ella | 268-8315 |
| Sidney Deener Elementary School | |
| Cloverdale Blvd. | 268-3850 |
| Southwest Middle School | |
| 1103 Woodruff | 268-3125 |
| West Side Elementary School | |
| 512 Country Club | 268-0111 |

Special Services

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Newhope Specialized Industries | |
| 1223 Linden | 268-5448 |
| Longwood Intermediate Care | |
| 96 N. Sawmill Rd. | 279-2586 |
| Sunshine School | |
| 1103 W. Park | 268-9227 |

Private Education

Harding Academy
P. O. Box 10775
E. Park Ave. 279-7200

College, Technical, and Other Opportunities

ASU-Beebe Branch
N. Palm & Iowa, Beebe 882-6452

Foothills Technical Institute
1800 E. Moore 268-6191

Harding University
900 E. Center 279-4000

Searcy Beauty College
1004 S. Main 268-6300

Utilities

Arkansas Louisiana Gas
2802 E. Race 268-2434

Entergy Corporation
410 E. Race 279-3220

Searcy Water and Sewer
300 W. Arch 268-2481

Southwestern Bell 1-900-9850

Communication

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Channel 16 Television | |
| Owned and Operated by | |
| Harding University | 279-4040 |
| KAPZ-KKSY Radio | |
| 205 E. Race | 268-0596 |
| KPIK FM Radio | |
| 1206 N. Main | 882-3331 |
| KWCK AM-FM Radio | |
| 100 E. Arch | 268-7123 |
| KABK-J97.7 Radio | |
| 121 Radio Hights Dr | 305-0977 |
| White County Video (W.C.V.) | |
| 1927 Beebe-Capps Hwy. . . . | 268-4117 |
| Chanel 3 Television | |
| 1913 Beebe-Capps Exp. . . . | 268-6262 |

Newspapers

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| The Daily Citizen | |
| 3000 E. Race | 268-8621 |
| The Merchant Shopper | |
| 705 Marion | 268-0700 |
| Arkansas Democrat-Gazette | |
| Little Rock, AR | 378-3456 |

Car/Driver Information

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Arkansas State Revenue Office | |
| 402 W. Vine | 268-2802 |

Employment

Employment Security Division

501 W. Arch 268-8601

Financial Institutions

First Community Bank

2307 W. Beebe Capps Exp. . 207-6000

First Security Bank

314 N. Spring 279-3400

Regions Bank

200 W. Race 268-4211

Simmons First Bank

125 N. Poplar 268-7575

More detailed lists are readily available on the following: Motels, Restaurants, Utilities, Public Services, Apartments, Realtors, Building Contractors and Supplies, Churches, Schools, Day Care Facilities, etc. Please contact the Searcy Chamber of Commerce, 2323 South Main, Searcy, Arkansas 72143, (501) 268-2458

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The *ENTREPRENEUR* is a quarterly journal and newsletter addressing contemporary economic issues from a moral perspective. One may not agree with every word printed in the *ENTREPRENEUR* series, nor should feel he needs to do so. It is hoped that the reader will think about the points laid out in the publication, and then decide for himself.

About the Author

Dr. Don Diffine is currently Professor of Economics at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, and Director of the Belden Center for Private Enterprise Education. Senior Research Associate of Harding's American Studies Institute, Dr. Diffine is listed in the Heritage Foundation's Guide to Public Policy Experts. He has eight books and 20 monographs in print and presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Arkansas Council on Economic Education.

The recipient of the \$7,500 Freedoms Foundation Principle Award for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education, Dr. Diffine has received Freedoms Foundation awards in the categories of Non-profit Publications, Economic Education, Public Affairs-Advertising, Public Address, and Published Works. He is the faculty winner of a \$1,000 First Place prize in a national essay contest judged by Nobel Economist Milton Friedman.

In May 2000, at an international exposition in Kansas City, he was inducted into the Samuel Moore Walton Free Enterprise Hall of Fame. He received the "Champion of Enterprise" award in 1995 and became the first inductee into the National Students In Free Enterprise Hall of Fame in Kansas City. The First Annual Distinguished Scholar Award was also presented in 1988 to Dr. Diffine in Cleveland, Ohio, by the Association of Private Enterprise Education. A member of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, Dr. Diffine has provided Congressional testimony on business problems, economic impact statements, and inflation-recession dilemmas.

He is married to the former Dion Hillman of Kailua, Hawaii. Dion is a math teacher in the Searcy public schools. The Diffines have two children: David, 29, a medical doctor; and Danielle, 27, an accountant.

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